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V.—NOTES ON A CRANNOGES IN LOUGH NANEVIN. By G. H. KINAHAN,
F. R. G. S. I.

[Read December 10, 1866.]

I BEG to call the attention of the Academy to an unrecorded Crannoge in Lough Naneevin, townland of Gortacarnaun, parish of Killanin, barony of Moycullen, and county of Galway—Ordnance Map, No. 67.

Last summer (1865) I remarked that this island seemed to be a Crannoge, but did not land on it. This summer, hearing that there were wooden piles around it, I had a boat conveyed to the lake, and, in company with George O'Flahertie, Esq., of Lemonfield, examined it.

IDEAL SKETCH OF THE CRANNOGES.*

The near half of the huts being removed, to show the interior restored from the discoveries in this and other Crannoges, more especially those in Loughs Rea and Ballin. In most, if not in all, of these Crannoges, there seemed to have been a space in the centre devoid of huts, which may have been used in common by the inhabitants, as in it are found the remains of fires, with stone seats and kitchen middens near them. The height of the huts seems to have been about five feet, as Mr. Hemsworth, of Loughrea, informed us that, when the large Crannoge there was first opened, "on some of the vertical beams were tenons fitting into mortises on horizontal beams;" and, as these latter were about five feet above the basket floors, they point to the height of the chambers: moreover, this is the average height of the subterranean dwellings or earth caves in the Rathes, Cahirs, Liss, &c. Whether the roofs sloped inwards or outwards has not been proved. Doorways 2·5 feet wide were found in Shore Island Crannoge, Lough Rea: but their height has not been proved; in the sketch they are made low, similar to those found in Cloghauna, Earth Caves, &c. No windows have been represented, as none up to the present have been found; but it is not likely the huts were without them.

* The wood engraver has not been successful in his representation of the inhabitants of the Crannoge, as they are very diminutive compared with the supposed height of the huts; moreover, they are dressed similar to the people of the present day.

The Crannoge (*a* in Map, Plate VII.) is of an oval shape, being about 150 feet long, and 75 feet wide. On the south a narrow causeway (*c* on Map), now partly submerged, joins it to the mainland, and from its northern end a spit (*b* on Map), about 6 feet wide, and 200 feet long, extends into the lake. On a drift hillock, near the east margin of the lake, there is the ruin of a Liss (*d* on Map), or clay fort.

That this island is artificial seems evident, as round the Crannoge and the spit the water immediately becomes deep, and also on each side of the causeway. No circles or lines of enclosing piles were observed, although they may exist; but, if they do, they are covered with bog stuff, and are under the present surface of the water. In the causeway no piles or beams were found, but it seems to have been constructed as a passage into the Crannoge.

Since the island was inhabited it seems to have been covered by water to at least two feet higher than at present, as shell marl is found on the parts that are below that level. On the south shore of the Crannoge there is a row of round oak piles, about four inches in diameter, bearing N. 30 W.; on the S. W. shore are two rows of similar piles, about five feet apart, and alongside them are oak beams, all bearing N. 55 W. Opposite to these, near the centre of the island, a thick oak beam, having a similar bearing, was found; at the shore on the N. W. there is a double row of piles, seemingly part of a wall, bearing north and south. Near the junction of the island and the spit there are ash beams, running S. 63 W. (mag. E. and W.) with the length of the latter; to the south of the spit are thick oak piles, bearing S. 63 W., and diagonally across it are ash (?) beams forming a flooring. The S. 63 W. piles may be part of the south formation wall of the spit.

On the east of the Crannoge no piles were observed, but there was an irregular flooring of ash, willow, and oak beams and from the willows, trees have grown, which now form a fringe round the island.*

Six small excavations were made, and from them we proved that under nearly the whole of the Crannoge there was a basket flooring, about a foot below the present water level. In one of these sinkings, near the centre of the island, the following section was found—in this place the surface of the ground was about three feet higher than the level of the water:—

Section of the Crannoge.

	Feet.
3. Bog stuff, with a few bones, some sticks and stones,	3.5
2. { A bed of regularly laid fern stalks and leaves (<i>Pteris aquilina</i> , or Brake fern), on a flooring of wicker work, made of hazel rods, about an inch in diameter. Over the ferns were a few bones, and a quantity of nut shells,	0.5
1. { Bog stuff, mixed with branches of trees, and containing a few stones and logs of timber; this stuff was not bottomed, Over }	5.0
	9.0

* These fringes of willow trees I have remarked round many Crannoges, and in every case they may have grown from some of the beams.

About eight yards on the north of this section there was a heap of wood ashes, about eight feet in diameter, three feet deep in the centre, and on it was a large flagstone, that had been used as a hearth. This may have been the principal fireplace, the stone being raised as the ashes accumulated; for about four feet west of it was a long rude bench, formed of stones. From the bench to the fireplace, and for some distance to the east of it, there was no wicker flooring. A little east of the fireplace the polishing stone (*c. 1.*), the *Soighead* (*pronounced* scythe) (*c. 2.*) a few sea shells, and stones, charred bones, and hazel nut shells were found in what appeared to be a kitchen midden. Very few bones were met with in any of the explorations, as no excavation could be made near the outside of the Crannoge, on account of the height of the water.

The implement numbered *c. 1.* may have been a polisher, as it has on the small end a chisel-shaped point, one side of which seems to have been used for burnishing; the other end is beak-shaped, and forms a polishing point; the sides also seem to have been put to a similar purpose, while the edges have been roughened with a rasp to give a grip to the fingers.

The *Soighead* (*Anglice*, a dart-head), numbered *c. 2.* is made of the Carboniferous Sandstone of the neighbourhood; it seems to have been last used as a sharpening stone.

The sea stones were small round pebbles of white quartz like what the children of the present day use for playing "jack-stones" with.* The bones consisted of those of the cow, sheep, pig, and goose, the latter being rather numerous. Some sort of metal seems to have been in use when this Crannoge was built, as the piles were pointed with a sharp cutting instrument; the hazel rods also show a clean smooth cut. Pieces of chert were rather frequent, especially in the neighbourhood of the fire place. Off some of these, chips seem to have been knocked, which would suggest that these had been brought here to manufacture into arrow heads; but, unfortunately, none of the latter were found, and therefore the supposed "cores" were not preserved.

* In a late visit to Inish Maan (the Middle Island of Aran), while sheltering in one of the cabins, I observed the children playing with stones similar to these, and they keep them in a hole in the chimney. The stones found in the Crannoge were also near the fireplace.